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## Reflecting on open and distance educational practices based on insights from educational practitioners and learners

Lucy Rai

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EDITORIAL



## Reflecting on open and distance educational practices based on insights from educational practitioners and learners

Welcome to the second issue of Volume 35 of *Open Learning*. This issue draws together a collection of papers which consider a range of aspects of enhancing the online learning experience of students. Turkey features in this issue with Turan and Cetintas's paper on video lessons and Çakıroğlu and Kılıç's work on communities of inquiry. Çakıroğlu and Kılıç's paper, which draws on data from a public university in Turkey, addresses the important issue of developing effective online learning communities. The authors employ the Communities of Inquiry (CoI) framework (Garrison, 2011) in the context of synchronous online learning. The study investigated levels of congruence between students' reported perceptions and observed behaviours in relation to the constructs of social presence, cognitive presence and teaching presence. Drawing on both qualitative and quantitative data in the form of survey, recorded discussion and observation, the paper concludes that participants' perceptions and behaviours of communities of inquiry constructs showed similar characteristics. Turan and Cetintas's article shares the outcomes of a study into factors influencing the adoption of online video lessons in the context of flipped classrooms at a large university in Turkey. This paper builds on prior consideration of the growing significance of video lessons (for example, Harrison, 2019; Valor Miró et al., 2014). Employing the six constructs of ease of use, usefulness, enjoyment, intention, computer self-efficacy and relative advantage. The data suggested that ease of use and computer self-efficacy were the most significant factors in determining how useful students found video lessons and, based on their findings, the authors conclude that it is important to consider technological, social and personal factors when using video lessons.

The theme of blended learning is continued in Luo, Hostetler, Freeman and Jill Stefaniak's systematic global literature review of the use of Open Educational Resources (OERs). The authors propose that this development has been a strategy to address the rising costs of traditional educational literature, a proposal reflected in, for example, Wang and Wang (2017). The paper concludes that while the use of OERs can be challenging, for example, due to discoverability and sustainability, they can provide effective means to deliver learning. The authors caution that learning needs to be well designed and effective partnerships established between instructional designers, e-learning staff and librarians. They propose that further research is needed on how to effectively integrate the use of OER into higher education.

The papers from Bervell and Umar and also Rienties, Olney, Nichols and Herodotou draw on practitioner feedback on using digital tools. Bervell and Umar's paper investigates the reasons for tutor anxiety in using a learning management system in the context of blended learning in Ghana. This quantitative study undertaken in the context of higher education in Ghana proposes that the levels of anxiety experienced by tutors relates to factors including outcome expectancy, influence from colleagues and system usage support. Rienties, Olney, Nichols and Herodotou's study questions the ethics and usefulness of a learning analytics system. The development of learning analytics to support understanding of student behaviour and also

guide interventions has been a significant area of discussion in Open Learning (see Atherton et al., 2017; Walker et al., 2019; Rienties et al., 2017). This study shares learning from The Open University (UK) in the employment of learning analytics to inform real time feedback to students. Data was gathered from a cross-university workshop in order to elicit user-stories. Data from this workshop indicated the significant challenge of addressing four areas where additional work was needed, namely communication, personalisation, integrated design, and development of an evidence-base. The authors invite the distance learning community to engage in further debate on the value of integrated learning-analytics systems.

The book review provided by Iniesto, in common with Luo et al., considers the impact of OER with a review of *Open Education: from OERs to MOOCs* by Mohamed Jemni and Mohamed Koutheair Khribi, published by Springer.

Finally, on behalf of Chris Douce, Denise Whitelock and myself, I would like to thank all our recent reviewers for their valuable contribution to *Open Learning*. Our thanks, also, to Paola Trimarco, Book Reviews Editor, and Vicky Cole, Editorial Assistant, for the work they do to ensure the smooth running of the Journal.

## Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

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Lucy Rai

Senior Lecturer, Faculty of Welfare, Education and Language Studies, The Open University, Milton Keynes, UK

 [lucy.raï@open.ac.uk](mailto:lucy.raï@open.ac.uk)